

# THE GATHERING OF THE INLAND VALLEY

THE PRAYER OF FAITH & AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

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## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF GROWING IN FAITH

- A. David was zealous to experience *all* the benefits of God's grace available to him (*Ps. 103:1-5*). The fullness of our covenant blessings will come in the resurrection and the age to come. Yet we must not draw back from experiencing all the blessings that God has ordained for us in this age. We hunger, thirst, crave & desire them all.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction. (Ps. 103:2-4)*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled. (Mt. 5:6)*

- B. Ask for an increase! We do not always know the "measure" of covenant blessing that we will receive in this age, so I encourage all of us to seek a "double portion" of whatever blessings we are currently receiving.

*"...for everyone who asks receives...suppose a son asks his father for a fish he will not give him a snake...how much more your heavenly Father shall give you the Holy Spirit when you ask Him." (Luke 11:10-13)*

- C. Pray in faith! We are to pray in faith so that our prayers will actually produce results, believing that God will answer us by releasing a greater measure of His blessing and power.

*"Therefore I tell you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you." (Mk. 11:24)*

- D. The "prayer of faith" results in releasing God's blessing. It includes prayer with confidence—in the *authority of Jesus* over sickness and the works of darkness, in the *blood of Jesus* to qualify weak people to be vessels who release His power, and in *His desire* to bless His people.

*And the prayer of faith will save [heal] the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. (Jas. 5:15)*

- E. Jesus taught on faith as a foundational kingdom principle (Mt. 8:10, 13, 26; 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 15:28; 16:8; 17:20; 21:21; Mk. 2:5; 4:40; 5:34; 9:23; 10:52; 11:22-24; Lk. 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25, 48; 12:28; 17:5-6, 19; 18:8, 42; 22:32). As we *believe* Him for more of His promises, we will experience more of God's activity and provision for us, and we will enjoy our relationship with Him more. Even Jesus was unable to do mighty works where there was great unbelief (Mk. 6:5-6).

*Jesus said to the centurion, “...as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” (Mt. 8:13)*

*Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” (Mt. 9:29)*

- F. **Cultivate Your Faith!** We intentionally cultivate growing in faith by hearing and speaking God’s word (Rom. 10:17). We want to avoid two extremes—humanistic, positive thinking that has faith in human ability rather than God. We do not have faith in faith. Secondly unbelief that neglects to cultivate faith in what God promised in His Word.

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)*

- G. Faith is the substance (title deed) of what we possess in the spirit before it manifests in the natural. Biblical promises are like a title deed to what we already possess in the spirit.

*Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for. (Heb. 11:1)*

- H. When Scripture states that God *hears* our prayers, it means that He *approves* of our requests. When we pray according to God’s promises and His will, we can have confidence that He approves of the request. It is at this time that we “receive” the request in the spirit realm.

*This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 Jn. 5:14)*

## II. OUR PRAYER REQUESTS: TWO WAYS (MK. 11:24)

- A. Jesus described how faith operates. He indicated that we receive our prayers in two ways. First, we “receive” them in the spirit realm (v. 24b), and then “have” them in the natural (v. 24c).

*“...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart [because of evidence from the Spirit] but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural].” (Mk. 11:23-24)*

- B. We need to be aware of the distinction between the spiritual and the natural realms to understand how faith and prayer work together. We engage in faith for God’s promises or requests that we have received in the spirit. Jesus spoke of continuing to believe that we have received the “title deed” (in the spirit realm) to our requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm.

### III. FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYING IN FAITH: A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

- A. **Principle One: The Kingdom of God is Voice Activated:** Verbalize your requests to the Father. Many *think* about a prayer request without actually *praying* for it. God knows our needs (Mt. 6:32), but requires that we ask Him for them—asking causes us to connect with His heart and to recognize specific blessings as His answer to our prayers. Asking causes us to know that what we say *both* moves His heart *and* matters to Him.

**...in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.** (Phil. 4:6)

**Yet you do not have because you do not ask.** (Jas. 4:2)

- B. **Principle Two: Receive your requests in the spirit realm:** When Scripture states that God *hears* our prayers, it means that He *approves* of our requests. When we pray according to God's will, we know that He approves of the request, so we are to *receive it in the spirit realm* with confidence.

**This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.** (1 Jn. 5:14)

1. God has already given us every spiritual blessing that exists in the heavenly realm (Eph. 1:3). These blessings include the indwelling Spirit; the right to use Jesus' authority; the promise of God's provision, protection, and direction to do His will; and more.

**...Father...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.** (Eph. 1:3)

2. Additionally, we often pray for things that are not specifically promised in Scripture, but that are not in opposition to the Word of God either. For example, a person may pray that it will not rain on their wedding day, or that they will be accepted as a student at a prestigious university, or that they will be accepted on a worship team, or get the job they applied for.

- C. **Principle Three: Engage in faith** that you have received what you asked for. Jesus spoke of the necessity of *continually believing* that we have received the "title deed" (in the spirit realm) to our prayer requests as the condition for receiving them in the natural realm.

**"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them [in the spirit], and you will have them [in the natural]."** (Mark 11:24)

- D. **Principle Four: Ask with persistence** (Lk. 11:8), and/or remind the Lord of His Word (Isa. 62:6).

We ask the Lord to release a blessing *in a greater measure* in the natural realm along with thanking Him for and reminding Him of what He has already given us in the spirit realm.

***“You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes [what He promised]...” (Isa. 62:6-7, NASB)***

1. In prayer, put the Lord in remembrance of His Word and what He has given us in the spirit realm in Christ—that which He has promised to give us in relation to our circumstances.

***“Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case.” (Isa. 43:26)***

2. **Dialogue with God!** Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about conversing and connecting with Him relationally. We believe God has approved of our prayer and released it to us in the spirit realm; therefore, we never stop reminding Him of it and thanking Him for it.

3. Jesus emphasized the value of perseverance in asking Him to release His blessings in a greater measure in the natural (Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:5-10; 18:1, 7). Jesus taught a parable (Lk. 11:5-10) to show the value of asking with perseverance. The verbs Jesus used are in the *present continuous tense*, meaning that we are to ask and keep on asking (v. 9).

***“Because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs... ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find.” (Lk. 11:8-9)***

4. We ask persistently that the request be manifest in a *greater measure* in the natural realm. We do not ask God to give us the spiritual blessings that He has already given us in the spirit realm; rather, we ask Him to release them in a greater measure in the natural realm.

5. Paul called us to pray *with all perseverance*. Therefore, we should never stop asking, reminding, and thanking God until we see the answers to our requests with our eyes. But we do not *earn* answers to prayers by our persistence or obedience.

***...praying always...being watchful to this end with all perseverance... (Eph. 6:18)***

- E. ***Principle Five:*** Receive your requests in the natural realm. Prayers that are in God’s will are always answered in God’s timing and way, so do not give up too quickly if the answer is delayed.
- F. How does faith grow? By hearing and speaking God’s Word. We are to confess the Word over our heart and our circumstances and against the works of the enemy. We ask with persistence (Lk. 11:8); we thank God and remind Him of His promises (Isa. 62:6) of what He has given us in the spirit realm.

#### IV. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

- A. The gospel has qualified us to freely receive God's love, power, favor, and many other benefits. We experience these benefits by faith—confident agreement—in Jesus' work on the cross.

*The gospel of Christ...is the power of God to salvation [from the penalty and power of sin and Satan] for everyone who believes. (Rom. 1:16)*

- B. On the cross, Jesus gained victory over Satan for us, removing his *legal* right to torment us.

*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [His death and resurrection]. (Col. 2:15)*

*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:8)*

- C. We have been transferred to God's kingdom and qualified to freely receive new benefits.

*He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom... (Col. 1:13)*

- D. Jesus gave His Church authority over the works of Satan. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government (backed up by the military).

*"I give you the authority...over all the power of the enemy." (Lk. 10:19)*

- E. We have the keys, or authority, in Jesus' name to bind (stop) demonic activity and to loose (release) God's power (Mt. 16:18).

*"I will give you the keys of the kingdom...whatever you bind on earth will be [shall have been] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be [shall have been] loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:19)*

- F. Satan's attacks will continue unless we resist them using our authority in Christ. We take our stand against the devil, resisting him by declaring the truth of God's Word in the face of Satan's attacks.

*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas. 4:7)*

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith. (1 Pet. 5:8-9)*

- G. Walking in victory includes an element of “wrestling” in our resistance of Satan’s attacks. We must maintain the ground we take from the enemy, knowing that demons return to attack us again (Mt. 12:43-45). We employ the *shield of faith* and the *sword of the Spirit* by speaking God’s Word. Satan’s fiery darts strike people as irrationally heightened feelings of fear, anger, lust, oppression, anxiety, etc. We resist demonic influences by declaring the Word against them.

***We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...in the heavenly places...taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:12-17)***